(c) whether the Australian Minister had met various Union Ministers and had discussions regarding various issues;

(d) if so, whether any agreement has been signed; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir. Both India and Australia are keen to expand bilateral ties in all fields including education, economic, environment and traditional sectors such as mining.

(b) During his visit to India in April 2002 to attend the 2nd India-Australia Ministerial Framework Dialogue, the Australian Foreign Minister Mr. Alexander Downer expressed keen interest in cooperation in various fields including mining, to increase economic and trade cooperation between the two countries.

(c) The Australian Foreign Minister met External Affairs Minister with whom he reviewed bilateral, regional issues and international issues of mutual concern. The Foreign Minister also called on Prime Minster, Home Minister, Defence Minister, Culture & Tourism Minister, and Commerce & Industry Minister. The subjects discussed during these meetings included growing bilateral political relationship, and our expanding trade, investment, energy, education and tourism links.

(d) and (e) Two MoUs were signed during the visit-the MoU on Co-operation in the field of Tourism and the MoU on Cultural Heritage Co-operation between Aus Heritage, Australia's network of heritage practitioners and Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH).

Change in American attitude and perception towards India

1688. DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:
SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA:

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a sea change in the attitude and perceptions towards Indian on the part of the United States;

(b) if so, whether there is a remarkable degree of understanding on a number of issues including terrorism;

(c) whether, in large number of cases, the U.S. has fully agreed with India's views; and

(d) if so, to what extent both the countries have agreed to improve their relations further in all internal and international issues?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH) : (a) In March 2000, Prime Minister and former U.S. President Bill Clinton agreed that the two countries must chart a new and purposeful direction in their relationship. In November 2001, Prime Minister and President Bush agreed to work together to complete the process of qualitatively transforming India-U.S. relations.

(b) and (c) The two sides recognise that they share many common values, interests and opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation, as also many common challenges, which includes terrorism. This provides a basis for convergence of views on a number of issues.

(d) The two sides are pursuing broad-based and intensive engagement and deepening cooperation on bilateral, regional and international issues of mutual concern.

G-8 Nations' instructions to Pakistan to prevent terrorism

1689. SHRI MOOLCHAND MEENA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Group of Eight Nations urged Pakistan to prevent terrorists operating from its soil at the end of a two-day summit in the Canadian Rockies;

(b) if so, whether it was agreed in the conference that Pakistan must put a permanent stop to terrorist activity originating from territory under its control;

(c) whether Government have welcomed this move; and

(d) if so, whether all the G-8 Nations have been providing details of the terrorist activities operating even now from their soil?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH) : (a) and (b) Yes, Sir.